

SHINING TIME STATION

"THE MONKEY'S CLAW"

BY

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SCENE 1

(MAINSET)

(STACY AND A FRAZZLED-LOOKING CIRCUS RINGMASTER WITH A CLIP BOARD AND PEN ARE TALKING. BEHIND HIM A JUGGLER AND ACROBAT DO TRICKS.)

STACY:

Moving a circus is complicated.

RINGMASTER:

Not if you're organized like me.

STACY:

Can I do anything to help?

RINGMASTER:

No, I have a system. Everything is here on my list. I check it off as it's loaded on the train.

(HE LOOKS FOR SOMETHING IN HIS POCKETS, UPSET.)

STACY:

Did you lose something?

RINGMASTER

My glasses; I can't read my list.

(STACY READS THE LIST ALOUD, AS A JUGGLER WALKS TOWARD THEM, JUGGLING.)

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

(THE JUGGLER, OBJECTS IN AIR,
REACHES OVER INTO RINGMASTER'S
POCKET, GETS GLASSES, AND HANDS
THEM TO HIM.)

RINGMASTER:

Yes, I knew I put them in
a safe place. Oh no.
Where's my list?

(HE PUTS ON THE GLASSES.)

STACY:

Here. I have it.

RINGMASTER:

Thank you. Now, where
was I?

(HE NOTICES THE ACROBAT, GETTING
INTO A KNOT.)

Excuse me! What are you
doing tied up here?
Straighten up and get on
that train. Now!

(BILLY WANDERS OVER.)

SFX: TRAIN ABOUT TO LEAVE PLATFORM

V/O:

All aboard!

(STACY AND BILLY AD LIB GOODBYES AS
RINGMASTER, JUGGLER AND ACROBAT
EXIT TO DEPARTING TRAIN. BILLY
WAVES, EXITING TOWARDS HIS
WORKROOM. STACY REALIZES SHE HAS
THE LIST.)

STACY:

Wait! You forgot your
list! Oh dear, too late.

SFX: MR. CONDUCTOR APPEARS

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

(MR. CONDUCTOR IS HOLDING A FULL SIZE COTTON CANDY CONE, WHICH TOWERS OVER HIM LIKE THE LEANING TOWER OF PISA. HE SURVEYS IT WARILY, TALKING TO IT, WITH FEAR AND WONDER, IN CARLIN AT-CARNEGIE/MAN-AGAINST-THE-UNIVERSE STYLE.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

They ought to give directions with this stuff. How do you approach it? It's frightening. If I jump on the top, I could fall in and disappear forever. Centuries from now they'll find me: The Pink Sugar Mummy. Oldest Human To Die From Eating Too Much Junk Food.

(HE TRIES TO BALANCE IT, BUT IT'S TOP HEAVY.)

A little bite at the side? One chomp too big, the whole thing topples. I'll be caught in an avalanche of pink, sticky goo. Arrgh. What a way to go.

(HE REACHES AND TOUCHES IT. HIS FINGERS STICK.)

MR. C: (CONT'D)

Stuck! That's the worst thing. It gets everywhere: clothes, fingers, hair. It's permanent super stain indestructible crazy goo. But in your mouth, it disappears. One bite, you got nothing, a mouthful of air. Strange. This stuff baffles me. You get sick of it right away and yet, you never get enough of it. It's very zen. They should call it riddle food, not cotton candy. It's one of life's mysteries.

(THE KIDS AND STACY WATCH, AMUSED.)

DAN:

Want any help,
Mr. Conductor?

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Hi, kids. How was the circus?

KARA:

The best one ever.
Really.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

You say that every year.

BECKY:

No, I mean it. This year they had so many animals! There was one adorable mother and baby-

(MR. CONDUCTOR GETS UNEASY. HE WANTS TO LEAVE.)

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Yes, well, I don't have time now. Tell me all about it later. I have to run.

KARA:

How can you run with that?

STACY:

I'll carry it for you.
Let me just get my cap.

(STACY LOOKS AROUND FOR HER CAP AS MR. CONDUCTOR LOOKS AROUND FOR AN EXIT.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

I can't wait.

DAN:

We could help you eat it.

STACY:

Sure. I'll hold; you bite.

DAN:

That wasn't what I meant.

BECKY:

It's so big. We could eat some.

KARA:

Yeah. We could make it smaller, you could hold it better.

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

STACY:

That sounds generous.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

No. Thanks anyway.
I'm... I need the whole
thing. Sorry.

(THE KIDS EXCHANGE A LOOK. STACY,
LOOKING FOR HER HAT, NOTICES AND
DISTRACTS THEM BY LAUGHING.)

STACY:

Okay, where's my cap?
Come on, you guys. Stop
kidding around.

(SHE EXAMINES THEIR FACES.)

I can't tell who's hiding
it. They all look so
innocent. What do you
think, Mr. Conductor?

SFX: MR. CONDUCTOR DISAPPEARS

KARA:

Huh? That was weird!

STACY:

Yeah, what was that?

BECKY:

Maybe he's hiding your
cap.

STACY:

No. I probably misplaced
it.

BECKY:

Still, he's acting funny.

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

STACY:

Mr. Conductor must have something on his mind.

KARA:

He looked mad!

STACY:

He was probably distracted. Grownups sometimes look mad when they're only thinking hard.

DAN:

Yeah? Thinking about candy he didn't like but wouldn't share?

STACY:

Hmm. That's not like him, is it?

SCENE 2

(INT. JUKEBOX)

TITO:

Man, I am getting bad vibes.

TEX:

Don't look at me. I'm not the one who ordered the garlic bread.

GRACE:

He's not talking about breath.

TITO:

Something creepy is going on up there. Things are missing.

DIDI:

Yeah, folks act weird and disappear. I'm getting spooked.

TITO:

I better go down to my safe and check my money.

GRACE:

No sir. You're not leaving us alone. You're staying here.

DIDI:

Maybe we better go with him. A safe's gotta be safer than this.

(EVERYONE LOOKS AROUND APPREHENSIVELY.)

SCENE 2 (CONT'D)

TITO:

Show you where all my
money is? Make you sit in
that cramped and musty
metal room with nothing
to lean on but a few
rusty nickels. No way.
What kind of guy do you
think I am?

GRACE:

A sharp eyed skin flint
who'd die rather than
lose a nickel.

TITO:

Grace, how did a
beautiful girl like you get
so suspicious? You break
my heart.

SCENE 3

(BILLY STANDS OUTSIDE HIS WORKSHOP, LISTENING TO LOUD NOISES AND TALKING INSIDE. HE WAITS, THEN LIKE A COP, KICKS THE DOOR OPEN, AND FLATTENS HIMSELF AGAINST THE WALL TO THE SIDE.)

BILLY:

All right. I heard you.
I know you're in there.

(HE HEARS SOMEONE NEARING THE DOOR.)

Come on now. Turn the lights on and come out.
Nice and easy. No funny business. Both of you.

(MR. CONDUCTOR COMES OUT SHEEPISHLY.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Both? There's only one of me.

(BILLY IS SURPRISED AND EMBARRASSED.)

BILLY:

I didn't realize it was you.

(THEY ENTER THE WORKSHOP. BILLY LOOKS AROUND.)

I heard noises
and ...talking?

(IT'S EMPTY. MR. CONDUCTOR LOOKS SHEEPISH.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Sometimes I talk to myself. At mealtimes. I hate to eat alone.

SCENE 3 (CONT'D)

(PAPER WRAPPERS, SODA CUPS, BANANA PEELS AND SOME OF BILLY'S TOOLS LITTER THE FLOOR.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Sorry, I was just cleaning up.

BILLY:

Make yourself at home.
Whew, you eat a lot for a little guy.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Well, I work out. I lift weights.

(HE INDICATES BILLY'S TOOLS, A FEW LYING ON THE FLOOR. HE AND BILLY START PUTTING THEM BACK.)

BILLY:

Hey, okay. No problem.
I'm happy to see things used...

(BILLY LOOKS FOR ONE TOOL. NO LUCK.)

Where's my monkey wrench?

MR. CONDUCTOR:

What monkey? Who? Where.

BILLY:

It's not there any more.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

What are you talking about?

SCENE 3 (CONT'D)

BILLY:

A monkey wrench? It's a tool; like a claw, with a tightening screw. Have you seen it?

(MR. CONDUCTOR GETS DEFENSIVE.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Have I seen it? Maybe once, maybe a hundred times. Do I see it now? No. No, I don't.

(A LARGE SHADOW APPEARS ON THE WALL BEHIND BILLY. MR. CONDUCTOR SEES IT. SEEING HIS EXPRESSION, BILLY IS ABOUT TO TURN AROUND.)

BILLY:

What's the matter? You look like you just saw a ghost.

(MR. CONDUCTOR FRANTICALLY DISTRACTS HIM.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

On the floor. Quick, look.

(MR. CONDUCTOR KNEELS DOWN. BILLY FOLLOWS.)

I thought I saw it right here. No maybe there. Check under this. Your arms are longer.

(AS BILLY REACHES, MR. CONDUCTOR DISAPPEARS.)

BILLY:

Nothing there. Not even dust.

SCENE 3 (CONT'D)

(BILLY LOOKS AROUND FOR MR.
CONDUCTOR.)

Are you playing tricks on
me? I mean, it's not
even April Fool or
Halloween, or something,
is it?

(BILLY, ALONE, SHAKES HIS HEAD.)

Where'd he go? Something
funny is going on here.

SCENE 4 (CONT'D)

(THE ARCADE)

(SCHEMER IS HAPPILY COUNTING A MOUNTAIN OF COINS.)

SCHEMER:

Fifty five, fifty six.
Oh, look at this one.
It's so clean and shiny I
can see my reflection.

(HE HOLDS UP A SHINY COIN.)

Where's my curl? Let me
fix it!

(HE REACHES INTO HIS POCKET FOR A COMB. NO COMB.)

No, my comb is gone.
First my curl, then my
comb. I am having a
terrible hair day.

(HE NOTICES THE KIDS PLAYING NEARBY.)

And it's all...their
fault.

(SCHEMER RUNS OVER TO THE KIDS AND YELLS.)

Maggots. Cheaters. Thiefs.
Who stole it? Where's my comb?

DAN:

No one stole your comb.

SCHEMER:

Oh, playing games? "No
one" stole it means
"every one" took it.
You're all thiefs.
Right?

SCENE 4 (CONT'D)

BECKY:

Wrong! The plural of
"theif" isn't "thiefs".
It's thieves.

SCHEMER:

Aha. A confession. You
admit you're thieves.
Now, lets check your
hair. I'll know. My
comb has special powers.
It was the one could make
my hair curl do-

(DRAMATICALLY HE WRAPS HIS HAND UP
AND OVER HIS CURL USING HIS HAND
LIKE AN IMAGINARY COMB.)

THE WAVE...a giant wave.
Like a surfer's dream.
Like those breakers in-
where's that beach?

(SCHEMER, LOST IN HIS NARCISSISTIC
DREAM, IS AWAKENED BY THE
CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER.)

I warn you. You can hide
it now. You can wear
those goofy hairdo's,
wait til I'm out of
sight before you whip out
my comb and make...THE
WAVE. But I'll come
around a corner and catch
you. My comb and I will
be reunited. THE WAVE
will return.

(AS SCHEMER STORMS OFF, THEY WANDER
OVER TO THE SWITCH HOUSE, DOING A
PARODY OF SCHEMER.)

DAN:

Can you imagine us
wearing-

SCENE 4 (CONT'D)

DAN/BECKY/KARA:

"THE WAVE"?

(THEY BURST OUT LAUGHING.)

DAN:

Why does everyone suspect us?

BECKY:

Schemer never trusts anyone.

KARA:

Stacy's nice and she thought we took her cap.

BECKY:

Only as a joke. She just asked.

DAN:

But the way Mr. Conductor acted made me feel bad.

KARA:

Maybe you have something to feel bad about.

DAN:

That's not nice to say.

BECKY;

Kara, leave him alone.

DAN:

Thanks, Becky.

SCENE 4 (CONT'D)

KARA:

Dan, if there's anything you want to tell me, it's okay. I'll still be your friend.

DAN:

Well if that means you think I stole, I'm not your friend.

(THE KIDS COME UPON MR. CONDUCTOR WRITING A LETTER WITH A FULL SIZE, UNWIELDY PEN HE CAN BARELY HANDLE. HE FOLDS THE LETTER UP AS THE KIDS NEAR. HE IS LEFT HOLDING THE PENCIL.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Hi, kids. What's up?

(DAN POINTS TO THE PENCIL, SMILES.)

DAN:

That's up, right?

MR. CONDUCTOR:

And...

(PAUSE. THEY WAIT.)

DAN:

It's a joke.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

What's the punch line?

DAN:

What's up? The big pencil!

SCENE 4 (CONT'D)

(DAN LAUGHS. MR. CONDUCTOR,
PREOCCUPIED DOESN'T.)

Oh, forget it.

BECKY:

Why are you holding that
pencil?

(MR. CONDUCTOR LOOKS SURPRISED IT'S
IN HIS HANDS.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

That? Oh that. I'm ...
pencil pushing. Or at
least trying to. I often
hear office work called
pencil pushing. So I
tried it. And it's heavy.
Pushing a pencil all week
is hard work. I'd rather
work on trains.

(THE CHILDREN LOOK DUBIOUS.)

DAN:

It looked like you were
writing.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Writing? Right. And
wrong. I was trying to
write. But the pencil is
so big, it'd take all day
to write one letter.

(BECKY GOES TO TAKE THE PENCIL. HE
RESISTS.)

BECKY:

Tell me. I'll write it
for you.

SCENE 4 (CONT'D)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

You'll write it, right?

(BECKY NODS.)

What will you write?

BECKY:

The letter you were
writing.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

What letter?

KARA:

The letter in your
pocket.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Oh, that. I'm sick of
that one. Write
another...

(BECKY LOOKS APPROPRIATELY
CONFUSED.)

Pick a letter, any
letter, A to Z and write
that one. I'll lend you
my new pencil. Almost
new.

KARA:

Mr. Conductor, you're
teasing us.

DAN:

Yeah. You're acting
weird; it's not like you.
It doesn't feel nice. It
makes me nervous.

SCENE 4 (CONT'D)

BECKY:

It's like you're not our friend anymore.

(MR. CONDUCTOR, UPSET, APOLOGIZES.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

I'm sorry. Sometimes you can't help the way things look. They just have to work themselves out in time. Like with Henry...

SCENE 6

TTE: "THE SAD STORY OF HENRY"

SCENE 7
(MAINSET)

(THE KIDS LOOK LIKE MR. CONDUCTOR
SPOKE CHINESE.)

KARA:

That's it? That's the
end?

BECKY:

They just leave Henry in
the tunnel and brick it
up?

DAN:

That's cold. Very cold.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Henry just needs time off
to work out his problems.
He's got to get over his
fears. You see-

(STACY'S VOICE IS HEARD. SHE
SOUNDS ANNOYED.)

STACY (V/O):

Okay, that's it. Enough
fooling around, kids.
Taking my hat is one
thing, but this joke has
gone too far. Where's my
ticket punch? I need it
and I need it now. I
have to work. Becky?
Kara? Dan? Come out.
Come out. Where ever you
are.

BILLY(V/O):

I don't think it's them,
Stacy.

(ANGLE ON STACY AND BILLY TALKING
AS THE KIDS WITH MR. CONDUCTOR -
OVERHEAR THEM.)

SCENE 7 (CONT'D)

STACY:

Then who is it?

BILLY:

I don't know but
something is going on.
Things are missing all
over the station.

STACY:

Who's doing it, Schemer?

(BILLY IS RELUCTANT TO SAY THIS.)

BILLY:

I heard he lost something
too. But Mr. Conductor
is acting very strange
since the circus left.

STACY:

Maybe he knows something.
Let's ask him. (CALLS)
Mr. Conductor!

(MR. CONDUCTOR IS TRAPPED. HE SAYS
URGENTLY.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Remember what I said?
There's nothing to be
afraid of. No matter how
it looks, everything is
fine. I'm still your
friend.

(STACY SIGHTS HIM, AS SHE AND BILLY
WALK OVER.)

Trust me.

SCENE 7 (CONT'D)

(MR. CONDUCTOR DISAPPEARS. THE KIDS, UPSET, RUN TO STACY. BECKY IS NEAR TEARS. DAN LOOKS MAD. KARA IS BEWILDERED.)

STACY:

Why did Mr. Conductor disappear?

BECKY:

I bet Mr. Conductor is mad. He heard Billy talking about him, and he got mad.

BILLY:

Why would he get mad?

BECKY:

You said he was acting strange.

DAN:

He didn't want to talk to you about all the missing things. Like he took them, or something.

KARA:

Dan, how could you say that?

DAN:

Easy, like you think I stole.

STACY:

Children, we don't think Mr. Conductor is taking things.

SCENE 7 (CONT'D)

KARA:

Do you think we are?

(A PAINFUL MOMENT. BECKY STARTS CRYING.)

BECKY:

I don't like it here any more. I want to go home. I'm scared.

BILLY:

Don't say that. We're friends.

DAN:

Well, maybe you are. But Mr. Conductor is... different now. He wouldn't even give us any of his cotton candy.

(STACY AND BILLY LOOK AT EACH OTHER, CONCERNED.)

STACY:

This is not good. Not my cap and ticket punch; they're only things. But these feelings-anger, fear, distrust-are bad.

(SCHEMER RUNS IN, FULLY ARMED: BASEBALL BAT, CATCHER'S MASK, BANANA PEEL, HAND MIRROR, FLASHLIGHT AND SODA CAN, WHICH HE IS SHAKING.)

SCHEMER:

Here we are folks, sign up now and get my best rate. Schemer's personal protection policy.

SCENE 7 (CONT'D)

STACY:

Schemer, what's that outfit?

(SCHEMER DEMONSTRATES EACH ITEM.)

SCHEMER:

My one man all purpose home and body unisex protection plan. Is someone at your window? This mask scares him away. Is he hiding behind your back? My fog free mirror sees him. Is he coming at you or trying to slip away? Throw the banana at your feet; he falls and--

(SCHEMER WIELDS THE BAT FIERCELY, THEN STOPS.)

I don't want to scare the ladies here, so let me just say it's pretty strong stuff.

STACY:

And the soda?

(HE SHAKES THE SODA VEHEMENTLY.)

SCHEMER:

To spray in his face, confusing him just long enough to tie him up in my net and call the cops.

(SCHEMER MAKES A BIG ANNOUNCEMENT.)

There's a thief loose in town and no one is safe without me.

SCENE 7 (CONT'D)

STACY:

Don't jump to conclusions. Just because your comb is lost-

DAN:

And your cap.

BILLY:

And my monkey wrench.

BECKY:

And your ticket puncher.

BILLY:

Face it. That's a lot to disappear in a short time.

STACY:

Maybe there is a thief.

SCENE 7 (CONT'D)

(STACY AND BILLY TAKE A LONG LOOK
AT EACH OTHER.)

BILLY:

No maybe about it,
Stacy.

STACY:

Oh Billy, who could be
doing it? This is so
ugly.

(EVERYONE IS UNDER SUSPICION.)

BILLY:

I thought Mr. Conductor
took...I mean borrowed my
monkey wrench.

STACY:

And I accused the kids
of taking things. As a
prank but still...

BILLY:

You know, Schemer may be
right. Even a stopped watch is
right twice a day.

STACY:

Oh, I hope it's no one I
know.

BILLY:

The one way to find out
is to catch the thief.

SCENE7 (CONT'D)

STACY:

How? Things disappear
right under our nose.

BILLY:

We lay a trap. Tonight
we hide in the dark ' til
the thief comes, then we
catch him.

STACY:

Do we have to? Catch him
I mean. Can't we just see
who he is then tip toe
out and get the police?

(BILLY REACTS. THEY CALL THE KIDS
OVER.)

STACY:

Kids, I want you to go
home.

KARA:

When?

STACY:

Now.

KARA:

We don't have to go.
It's early. There's no
school tomorrow.

STACY:

We have special work to
do.

BECKY:

Catching the thief?
We'll help.

SCENE 7 (CONT'D)

DAN:

Look. All the missing things had metal. The thief is an android from a magnetic planet.

KARA:

No, they're all shiny. I bet a raccoon did it.

BECKY:

Well, android or animal, it has to get hungry so we should leave food out to attract the thief.

KARA:

Good idea. I'll get the cookies.

(BEHIND THEM, A LARGE DARK SHADOW PASSES.)

STACY:

Wait. You can't stay.
It could be dangerous.

DAN:

Great! Oh please let us stay. Please. It would be so exciting.

KARA:

If we catch him we'll be famous.

BECKY:

Oh please. I've never done anything dangerous.
Except run with a lollipop in my mouth.

SCENE 7 (CONT'D)

STACY:

We don't even know there
is a thief. We may stay
up all night and catch
nothing.

KARA:

Please? Staying up all
night sounds wonderful.

STACY:

This isn't a game. It's
serious. And I want you
to go home. Now.

(SEEING HER DETERMINATION, THE
CHILDREN RELUCTANTLY EXIT. AS THEY
WAVE GOODBYE.)

DAN:

Bye. I hope there is a
thief.

STACY:

I hope there isn't. I
hope it's a big waste of
time. I hope we move a
box to hide behind, and
find my cap down there
and Billy's monkey wrench
and...

BILLY:

Goodnight, children.

(THE KIDS EXIT CALLING GOODNIGHT.)

BILLY:

They're really something,
aren't they?

SCENE 7 (CONT'D)

STACY:

Yup. Such imagination.
And courage. They want
to stay!

BILLY:

Stacy, are you scared?
Honest.

STACY:

Of the dark, no. Of
sitting in the dark,
maybe. Of sitting in the
dark to catch a thief,
yes.

BILLY:

Let me do it alone,
Stacy.

STACY:

Absolutely not. Shining
Time Station is my job.
Let's do it. And let's
do it now. If I think
about it, I'll get scared
and fear makes everything
harder.

(STACY SMILES NERVOUSLY AS A LARGE,
DARK SHADOWED FORM PASSES BEHIND
HER UNNOTICED.)

ACT TWO

SCENE 8

(INT. JUKEBOX, NIGHT)

(THE PUPPETS STAND AROUND, WORRIED.)

DIDI:

Working here is the pits,
but being stolen sounds
worse.

REX:

Worse than Schemer?

TITO:

Ahh. Maybe it's not so
bad.

DIDI:

Get real, Tito. We know
Schemer and how to work
around him. We know
nothing about this thief.

GRACE:

Except Schemer's afraid
of him.

TITO:

Now don't you gals go
getting us all
hysterical. I been alive
and in show biz longer
than you.

GRACE:

Don't play big Daddy with
us, Tito. We've been out
there, too. We know how
bad it is.

SCENE 8 (CONT'D)

DIDI:

Before I got in the
musician's union, I
worked hard for Rick, the
darkly handsome producer.
He promised me a job in
the movies. Who knew he
only meant a popcorn
machine in the movie
theatre?

(AS WE DISSOLVE WE HEAR DIDI'S
VOICE:)

DIDI(V/O):

"It was hot and bright as
the tropics in Rick's
place..."

(SCENE 9: DIDI'S FLASHBACK:
THE POPCORN MACHINE: "RICK'S PLACE"

DIDI(V/O):

I was working with Maizy:
World's Dumbest Blonde
with the World's Corniest
Jokes. I tossed popcorn
in the air-with my strong
drummer arms-and Maizy
popped up with her stupid
jokes.

(DIDI TOSSES POPCORN AS MAIZY POPS
UP AND DOWN.)

MAIZY:

What do you do for a sick
bird? Get him treatment!

What do you do with a blue
elephant? Take him to
the circus and cheer
him up.

SCENE 8 (CONT'D)

DIDI(V/O):

Poor gal couldn't
remember her lines. I
had to help her.

(MAIZY POPS UP, OPENS HER MOUTH.
NOTHING. DIDI PEEKS UP JUST ENOUGH
TO WHISPER.)

DIDI:

What time is it when the
clock strikes thirteen?
Time to get a new clock.

(CUT BACK TO DIDI IN THE JUKE BOX.
EVERYONE IS LISTENING,
SYMPATHETICALLY TO HER TALE.)

DIDI:

We worked twelve hours a
day. Even Christmas.

(CUT BACK TO POPCORN MACHINE,
DECORATED FOR CHRISTMAS, AS ARE
MAIZY AND DIDI.)

MAIZY:

What's red and goes "Ho,
Ho, Plop"? Santa Claus
laughing his head off.

DIDI:

What's Tarzan's favorite
Christmas carol? Jungle
Bells.

DIDI(V/O):

But the worst was Rick.
He was awful and we were
his prisoners.

(DISSOLVE TO:)

SCENE 8 (CONT'D)

(THE POPCORN MACHINE:
RICK HOLDS A SALE MEETING IN HIS
MACHINE.)

RICK:

Okay, Kernels, Maizy,
Didi. Get out there and
sell popcorn. More
popcorn than you've ever
sold before. And if you
do-

MAIZY:

(FLIRTING) You'll what,
Rick?

(RICK FLASHES HIS SALESMAN'S SMILE.
LIKE HIS POPCORN IT'S WARM BUT
EMPTY, FULL OF HOT AIR.)

RICK:

Let you keep working.
Today and tomorrow and
on weekends, you can sell
popcorn for me.

DIDI:

But we need days off. And
a safe work place. With
fresh air.

RICK:

(MUMBLING) Union trouble
maker.

MAIZY:

Rick, we ain't never been
paid.

RICK:

You girls still owe me
for unpopped corn,
spilled butter.

SCENE 8 (CONT'D)

(AS RICK LAUGHS FIENDISHLY WE DISSOLVE TO:)

(INT. JUKE BOX.
EVERYONE SITS IN PUDDLES OF TEARS.)

GRACE:

How did you ever get out?

DIDI:

I smuggled a note in someone's bag, saying Rick was reusing the popcorn they swept up in the theatre at night. The Board of Health came and shut Rick down.

TITO:

What happened to Maizy?

DIDI:

Poor Maizy was stuck on Rick. The rat finally shucked her for some younger ear of corn. (SIGH) It was awful. I still have nightmares. I wake up, arms flailing, screaming bad jokes.

TITO:

Oh yeah? Like "What makes a piano laugh? Someone tickling the ivories."

(EVERYONE SHOUTS, VOICES RISING HYSTERICALLY.)

SCENE 8 (CONT'D)

GRACE:

What do you do if your
cat swallows a
dictionary? Take the
words right out of its
mouth.

TEX:

What did the pencil say
to the eraser? Take me to
your ruler.

REX:

What did the left ear say
to the right ear?
Between you and me we
need a haircut.

(DIDI PUTS HER HEAD IN HER HANDS
AND SOBS.)

DIDI:

Stop, please. I can't
stand it.

(TITO HUGS HER.)

TITO:

Oh, Didi, I'm so sorry.

TEX:

I guess you're so purty
we just figured you
always had it easy.

REX:

Just another pretty face.

SCENE 8 (CONT'D)

TITO:

Born with a silver spoon
in your mouth. Never
knew a day's work.

GRACE:

Guys, who could play
drums like Didi without
working real hard?

(EVERYONE AD LIBS IN AGREEMENT.)

DIDI:

Awh, guys, thanks.
You're the best. I hope
whoever steals us, keeps
us together.

TITO:

I never thought of being
stolen. Look at this
face. Would they put my
face on a milk carton?
They only use kids'
pictures. Do you see
this mug smiling at you
over your morning cereal?
"Lost. One piano player
with patent leather
hair."

DIDI:

Quit it. You're spookin'
us all.

TITO:

Let's play some music.
Here's a little number
that used to calm the
troops on the eve of
battle.

SCENE 10:

PUPPET SONG: WALTZING MATILDA

SCENE 11

(MAINSET: THE JUKE BOX IS ABLAZE IN AN OTHERWISE DARK AND EMPTY ARCADE. IN THE GLARE OF LIGHTS, WE SEE STACY'S FACE, TERRIFIED. SHE PEERS AT THE MACHINE, TREMBLING, THEN SUMMONS UP COURAGE.)

STACY:

All right, I caught you.

(HER VOICE IS SQUEAKY WITH FRIGHT. SHE CLEARS HER THROAT TO MAKE IT SOUND HUSKY AND FIERCE.)

Don't try to scare me
with music.

SFX: A BOX FALLS OVER

(STACY DROPS TO THE FLOOR,
TERRIFIED.)

All right, I know where
you are.

Come out from the boxes
or I'll-

Move every box til I find
the one you're in, then
shake it 'til you get
sick. Then I'll-

(SHE WAITS. NO REACTION.)

Poke it with a sharp
stick.

(STACY SEES SUITCASES START TO CREEP TO THE EXIT. STACY MAKES A FIERCE DOG BARKING SOUND.)

Now you woke the dogs.
You better turn yourself
in or the dogs will sniff
you out.

SFX: MAKING MORE ANGRY ANIMAL
NOISES, STACY RATTLES HER KEY
CHAIN.

SCENE 11 (CONT'D)

SFX: CHILDREN SCREAMING

(IN THE BEAM OF STACY'S FLASHLIGHT
WE SEE THE CHILDREN, TERRIFIED, RUN
SCREAMING.)

STACY:

Dan, Kara, Becky, it's
only me. Stop.
What are you doing here?

DAN:

We wanted to see you and
Billy catch the thief.

STACY:

And if we didn't? Or if
he got us first? Who'd
protect You
children belong home safe
with your family like I
said.

DAN:

Don't be mad, Stacy.

BECKY:

We just wanted to have
fun.

STACY:

This is not fun.

KARA:

Okay, we'll go home now.

(STACY ALMOST SNAPS AT THEM.)

STACY:

Walk home in the dark?
Are you joking? I'm
calling your parents to
come get you.

SCENE 11 (CONT'D)

(STACY EXITS. THE KIDS ROLL THEIR EYES.)

BECKY:

She lost her sense of humor.

KARA:

I knew this was a bad idea.

BECKY:

What's happened to everyone? Stacy's grouchy. Billy looks like my dad when he gets a flat and finds there's no spare in the trunk. And Mr. Conductor is...I don't know. Weird.

KARA:

Maybe they're all scared.

(THE CHILDREN, DISTURBED, BLOCK THIS THOUGHT.)

BECKY:

Grownups don't get scared!

DAN:

Yeah. Only babies do.
Not me.

SFX: BOX FALLS

(THE KIDS ALL JUMP. KARA NAILS THEM.)

KARA:

You both jumped. You're scared.

SCENE 11 (CONT'D)

BECKY:

I don't care what you think. I'm not and I know it.

KARA:

Prove it. Hide in the dark.

DAN:

How will you see I'm not scared. You'll be in the dark too.

KARA:

I know. There's a video here. FACING MONSTERS: FACING FEAR ITSELF. I dare you to watch it.

(DAN AND BECKY LOOK AT EACH OTHER.)

BECKY:

Okay, I will if we all do.

DAN:

Deal?

KARA:

Deal.

SCENE 12

(MUSIC VIDEO ABOUT FEAR.)

SCENE 13

(MAINSET AT NIGHT. DIM LIGHT.)

KARA:

That's good. I feel better now, like when my Mom showed me what scared me at night was my doll's shadow in the nightlight.

DAN:

Yeah, that's if you only imagine something. This time it's real.

(THIS THOUGHT SCARES THE CHILDREN.
THEY SMILE BRAVELY AT EACH OTHER,
BUT THE FULL FORCE OF THIS NIGHT
WITH A THIEF ON THE LOOSE HITS.)

DAN:

I wonder what's keeping Stacy? She left us all alone here.

BECKY:

But we're safe. She wouldn't leave us in danger. And Billy is always nearby if we need him.

KARA:

And Mr. Conductor?

DAN:

I don't know about him, after that tunnel story with Henry.

KARA:

Yeah, what was that?

SCENE 13 (CONT'D)

BECKY:

Do you suppose they're letting us stay in this room to punish us...like they let Henry stay in the tunnel?

KARA:

Oh, gross.

(STACY RETURNS.)

DAN:

Oh, good. It's you. We kept hearing scary noises.

STACY:

And did the suitcases move? And did you find kids behind it?

KARA:

No, just scary noises, like-

SFX: INTRUDER IN THE STATION.

STACY:

Like that?

BECKY:

Like you just did.

SFX: AGAIN A NOISE.

Like that.

STACY:

That wasn't me, sorry.

SCENE 13 (CONT'D)

DAN:

Wasn't me.

STACY:

Shhh.

(THE CHILDREN FOLLOW STACY'S LEAD
AND CREEP AROUND THE DARK STATION.
STACY WHISPERS.)

STACY:

Billy...Billy?

DAN:

Is he missing, too?

STACY:

It's our signal. I call
three times softly and he
comes. Billy. Billy.
Billy.

(NO ANSWER.)

DAN:

Call four.

SCENE 14

(THE JUKEBOX)

(THE PUPPETS RUSH INTO EACH OTHER'S ARMS.)

DIDI:

This is it. Our death scene. I always wondered what it'd be like when my number came up.

TITO:

I told you we should have gone down to my safe.

REX:

Oh, get stuffed, Tito.

TEX:

This is what we get for movin' to the city, Tex.

DIDI:

Oh, sit on it, Rex.

GRACE:

Didi, there's somethin'
I always meant to ask.
What's your sign?

(DIDI LOOKS SOULFULLY IN TO DIDI'S EYES.)

DIDI:

A stop sign. How can you talk about that at a time like this?

SCENE 15

(MAINSET AT NIGHT.)

(STACY FOLLOWS HER LIGHT ALONG THE WALL. SCARY SHADOWS HOVER, THEN A FIGURE DARTS IN THE LIGHT, SWIFT AS A COCKROACH ALONG THE FLOORBOARDS.

SHADOW(V/O)

Aaaargh!

(EVERYONE SCREAMS. STACY'S LIGHT DARTS WILDLY AS A NET FALLS ON HER AND SHE SCREAMS.

STACY:

Help, Billy. I'm trapped. Save the kids.
Billy!!!!

(THE LIGHT COMES ON, BLINDING EVERYONE. WE SEE EVERYONE RUN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS AS A HUGE FIGURE, IN STRANGE CLOTHES, TRIES TO FLEE.

BILLY RUSHES IN AND GRABS THE FIGURE BY THE COLLAR. IT'S SCHEMER IN HIS SUPER HERO GUISE.)

BILLY:

What are you doing here?

SCHEMER:

When there's something strange in the neighborhood...Who you gonna call? Schemer!

(AS SCHEMER POSES, A HAIRY MONSTER ARM APPEARS BEHIND HIM AND TURNS OFF THE LIGHT SWITCH.)

SCENE 16

(MAINSET)

(EVERYONE FREEZES THE DARK CREATURE MOVES AROUND THE DIM STATION. THEY POINTS TO IT IN SILENT TERROR. STACY MOVES TO THE LIGHT SWITCH, READY TO TURN IT ON. IN HER FLASHLIGHT SPOT, WE SEE BILLY POISED TO JUMP THE FORM. THE CHILDREN CLUTCH EACH OTHER, TERRIFIED. EACH HAS HIS HANDS ON THE OTHER- EYES, MOUTH, OR EARS-LIKE THE THREE MONKEYS: HERE NO EVIL, SEE NO EVIL, SCREAM NO EVIL.

STACY:

(WHISPERS) Ready, Billy?

(BILLY NODS VEHMENTLY. PAUSE.
STACY DOESN'T SEE.)

BILLY:

Stacy? Hello. What's wrong?

STACY:

I can hear but I can't see.

SCHEMER:

Eating carrots will improve your night vision, Miss Jones.

BILLY:

Cool it, Schemer. Stacy, when I say three, hit the lights.

STACY/SCHEMER/KIDS:

Three!

(THE LIGHTS GO ON TO REVEAL THE OMINOUS FORM OF A TERRIFIED BABY CHIMPANZEE, CLARISSA.)

SCENE 16 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

Help. It's King Kong come back to get us all.

BECKY:

Clarissa!

BILLY:

It's a monkey?

STACY:

No, it's a chimp.
Baby Clarissa from the circus. She's very friendly.

(AS EVERYONE RELAXES, CLARISSA JUMPS BEHIND THE TICKET COUNTER.)

SCHEMER:

Oh yeah? Only if she's getting paid. Show time, sweetcakes.

(CLARISSA MAKES A RUDE GESTURE TO SCHEMER AS MR.CONDUCTOR APPEARS.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Oh, there you are, baby.
Daddy was worried sick about you.

(MR. CONDUCTOR COAXES THE CHIMP FROM HIDING , DOING CHIMP THINGS WHILE TELLING HER STORY, LIKE CARLIN USED TO DO DOG AND CAT IMITATIONS IN HIS ACT, WHILE TALKING ABOUT THEM.)

SCENE 16 (CONT'D)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Clarissa's from the circus. She was too scared to go with them. They took her mother away and she didn't know why. I promised I'd help her, poor thing. I hid her in the station until I found her Mom. She'd gotten sick and was rushed to the vets but she's okay now. She'll be back with the circus tomorrow. So, things are fine. Except for Clarissa's toys all over. You know kids.

(CLARISSA STARTS PAYING AND CLOWNING. EVERYONE LAUGHS, AD LIBS DELIGHT, RELIEF.)

SCENE 17

(JUKEBOX)

(THE PUPPETS, RELIEVED, JUMP ABOUT.)

TITO:

For a second there, I thought that was it. The last act. Curtains. The big chill.

GRACE:

You know how you always wonder how you'll be in your last hour? Now I know. We'll be grouchy.

(THEY ALL LAUGH RUEFULLY.)

DIDI:

Say goodnight, Gracie.

SCENE 18

(MAIN SET: THE NEXT DAY)

(THE RINGMASTER IS THERE WITH CLARISSA.)

RINGMASTER:

Who's Mr. Conductor?

STACY:

Someone workin' on the railroad?

SCHEMER:

What's he talking about?

RINGMASTER:

Thanks to him, mother and baby chimp will be back together tonight. He wrote about Clarissa. I'd like to meet him.

STACY:

(EVASIVE) Well, who wouldn't want to meet a hero like that.

RINGMASTER:

Who is he?

STACY:

He's a very special person who looks out for his friends.

RINGMASTER:

Can I meet him before I go?

SCENE 18 (CONT'D)

DAN:

Nah, he's stuck in a tunnel with Henry. And who knows when Henry will get out.

SCHEMER:

But if there's any prize or reward, I'm the local hero.

SFX: TRAIN ABOUT TO LEAVE THE STATION.

RINGMASTER:

This time we're really leaving.

(HE LOOKS AROUND, ABSENTMINDEDLY.)

Now, have I forgotten anything?

(CLARISSA WALKS OUT WEARING STACY'S CAP, AND CARRYING THE MONKEY WRENCH AND COMB. HE GIVES THEM TO THE RINGMASTER, THEN TAKES HIS HAND.. THE RINGMASTER GIVES THE STOLEN ITEMS TO STACY. AS THEY WAVE GOODBYE, CLARISSA KEEPS LOOKING AROUND.

SFX: MR. CONDUCTOR

(MR. CONDUCTOR APPEARS, AND WAVES TO CLARISSA, AS THE RINGMASTER AND CHIMP LEAVE. AD LIB GOODBYES. SCHEMER SAUNTERS TO THE SPOT THE CHIMP LEFT.)

SCENE 18 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

I'm sorry to see him go.

(HE GIVES STACY AND BILLY A SUPERIOR SNEER.)

And to think you were afraid of such a cute little critter.

(FROM HIS PERCH, CLOSE TO SCHEMER'S EARS, MR. CONDUCTOR LETS OUT A GIANT TARZAN YELL. SCHEMER, TERRIFIED, HEADS FOR THE HILLS LEAVING EVERYONE LAUGHING IN HIS WAKE. THE CHILDREN TALK TO MR. CONDUCTOR.)

DAN:

Okay, now finish the story.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

You can see for yourself.
Clarissa and her mother live happily ever after.

KARA:

Not that one. Henry.

BECKY:

What happened inside the tunnel?

SCENE 18 (CONT'D)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Well, Henry overcame his fear in the end. Like Clarissa and you. When he forgot about his own worries and threw himself into the work at hand, helping out his friends, he was happy, and busy, and shining in use. As you shall see...

SCENE 19

(TTE: EDWARD, GORDON, AND HENRY)

(RUN END CREDITS OVER KIDS AND MR.
CONDUCTOR SMILING AT THE END OF
HENRY AND FRIENDS.)